



The Latest News

from the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

May 2020
A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

While our church building is closed and we are all practicing social distancing, Sunday worship services will be held virtually on Zoom, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Instructions and the link to participate are [here](#); meeting ID# is 336 941 336. If you don't have internet access, you can also listen over the telephone. Simply dial 1-646-558-8656. When prompted, enter 336 941 336#. (Long distance fees may apply.)

May 3

In the Storm: Coping with Climate Change

The Rev. James Galasinski

The environmental movement has been compared to a religion. There definitely are some similarities. The theology of the environmental movement definitely has guilt, shame, and sin. More positively, the rituals of the environment can help us cope with coming changes.

May 10

Bigger Boat Home

The Rev. Jon Coffee, Virtual Pulpit Guest

We've been sailing all our lives now, never a time like this have we known. In the era of Covid-19, the task of social justice and mercy require creatively re-imagining the work before us. The Rev. Jon Coffee shares a message about making sure there's enough room in our boat for everyone.

The Rev. Coffee serves as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid and Student Services at Meadville Lombard Theological School. He will join us from his home in Knoxville, Tennessee, where he lives with his husband, Keith, and their big fluffy cat, Cookie, who doesn't have much interest in boats or theology.

May 17

Finding Gratitude in a Pandemic

Youth Group with Carol Zimmerman, DRE

In this time of confusion and struggle, it is important to reflect on what you are grateful for. Our youth will share how they are finding gratitude during this difficult time.

May 24

Muhammed the Social Reformer

The Rev. James Galasinski

We all know about the prophet who started Islam. But what we may not know is how, as an orphan, he understood inequality and corruption. His religious reforms had social justice flowing through them.

May 31

Just Come on Home and the Hurt of Addiction

The Rev. James Galasinski

We can't forget about the other health crisis. Opioids are currently the main driver of a spike in drug overdose deaths. For many, addiction is a way of life that prolongs hurt. As a nation, we need to move into recovery.

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education; Shelby Hunkins, Assistant Director of Religious Education

Sara Trimm, Congregational Administrator

Teresa Veramendi, Social Justice Coordinator

Betsy Kepes, Music Coordinator; Carol Strome, Choir Director; Theresa Witmer, Handbell Choir Director

The Reverends Anne Marsh and Wade Wheelock, Ministers Emeriti

ON THE CALENDAR

Please print and post!



Sunday, May 3

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, May 4

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

3:00 p.m., Afterschool Story Time

Tuesday, May 5

3:00 p.m., Common Read Meet Up

4:15 p.m., Welcoming Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 6

6:30 p.m., Church Council Meeting

Thursday, May 7

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

6:30 p.m., Fun Night for All

Sunday, May 10

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, May 11

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

3:00 p.m., Afterschool Story Time

7:00 p.m., Faith in Action Meeting

Tuesday, May 12

9:00 a.m., Sacred Texts and Coffee

7:00 p.m., Second Tuesday Chalice Circle

Thursday, May 14

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

6:30 p.m., Fun Night for All

Sunday, May 17

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, May 18

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

3:00 p.m., Afterschool Story Time

Tuesday, May 19

4:00 p.m., Stewardship + B&F Meeting

Wednesday, May 20

6:30 p.m., RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 21

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

6:30 p.m., Fun Night for All

Sunday, May 24

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, May 25

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation

3:00 p.m., Afterschool Story Time

Thursday, May 28

2:00 p.m., Drop-In Chalice Circle

6:30 p.m., Fun Night for All

Sunday, May 30

10:30 a.m., Worship

Monday, May 31

Noon, Mindfulness Meditation



IT IS GOOD TO BE TOGETHER *Opportunities to Connect with Each Other!*

In this time of constant change, it is more important than ever to connect with each other in new ways. Check the [website](#) for updates and zoom meeting ID numbers.

Most committee meetings are still happening virtually. If you are a committee member, watch for email invitations to join the Zoom meeting at your normally scheduled meeting time.



JAMES' JOURNAL Our Digital Front Doors

As we lament our summer plans, grieve all the losses of life, and realize the uncertainty of not knowing when things will become normal again, it is very easy to become depressed. In fact, I think it is perfectly natural to feel spiritually dry right now. We do not have the flowing waters of normal life to quench our thirst. As disruptive as this pandemic is, we are keeping our virtual front doors open to this moment in history and all the change it lures us into.

I have to admit I never Tweeted in my life. I am not sure what TikTok is, and I have never used Instagram. I sit sometimes comfortably but mostly awkwardly in the digital world. I like granite and brick churches and wood pulpits. But I now have a YouTube Channel and own a teleprompter, a fancy microphone, video editing software, and a lighting system that makes my home office look more like a newscaster's than a minister's.

The Communications Committee has been moving us in a digital direction for some time now. They have been using Facebook and created a wonderful website among many things. But I have often thought, "It is great *they* are doing 'those things' but I will keep doing my ministry as I always have." I have learned over the past two months that websites, videos, and interactive social media are ministry.

We have seen the power of virtual worship. We are bringing together members and friends from as far away as Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, North Carolina, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Rochester, and Massena. However, this is a bigger opportunity than just streaming our services in the future when we can meet in person again, which we are pursuing. More and more people check out websites, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and online comments before they go anywhere in person. And not just younger people. Many of us do all our planning online before we have a real in person experience – just think about how we plan our vacations. At least for me it is all online, then we go into a more prepared in-person experience. It is the same with visitors to our congregation.

Our analog wooden doors have to become digital ones. I am up for the challenge and hope you are as well.

Physically distant but spiritually closer than ever,
The Rev. James Galasinski, Minister

PRESIDENT'S POST

I love seeing so many of our congregation, both near and far, through Zoom. While the technology doesn't always work exactly the way we want it to, I feel blessed that we are able to connect this way.



We will continue to meet through Zoom, phone calls, and emails for the foreseeable future. **The church building will remain closed until Council can determine it is safe to open the building in accordance with New York State public health guidelines.**

The incredible difficulty of the unknown is weighing on us all, but our ability to connect in many ways continues to be a source of strength for all of us. As always, please feel free to reach out to me at president@uucantonny.org.

Jennifer Whittaker, Church Council President

FAITH ENGAGEMENT

We are in unprecedented and unsettled times. Staying grounded in your faith can ease some of the uncertainty. Below are a few resources that may support you:

- [Doodles and Coloring Pages](#)
- [The Rev. James Galasinski's YouTube Channel](#)
- [Parenting During a Time of Physical Distancing](#)
- [UU Canton It's Good to Be Together Page](#)
- [UU Faith Formation at Home Page](#)
- [Braver/Wiser Weekly Messages](#)
- [UUA General Assembly](#)



May you find engaging and meaningful ways to stay connected to this faith community. Blessed be.

Carol Zimmerman, Director of Religious Education

THANK YOU

- Cara Coffin, Pete Beekman, Heather Rousell, and Dave Nelson for reading stories during our After-school Story Time.
- Tom Van de Water, Mary Michalek, Jim Williams, and Todd Moe for hosting Zoom meetings for our JR High OWL class.
- Danny Thomas, Ruth Baltus, and Ben Hunkins for joining the Youth Group via Zoom.

JOYS & SORROWS

- Our sincere condolences go out to the Kocho-Williams family, following the unexpected death of Alastair's father in late March.
- Our thoughts are with all who have a loved one who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. We hold coronavirus patients and all of the essential workers in our hearts.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Church Participation via Video and/or Audio

It has been terrific that so many people, both physically near and far away, have been participating in church services and activities via the Zoom video conferencing software! We acknowledge that this is a bit of a learning curve for many and will try and steer you to instructional materials and/or answer questions directly if you want to get the most out of the experience. One important note is that if you want to participate via phone only, make sure your phone plan allows for "unlimited" long-distance calling, as the Zoom phone contact number is a long-distance call.

During services on Sunday the hosts of the Zoom session mute participants, except those who have speaking, singing, or musical roles. We must do this to avoid potential audio chaos when approximately 100 people are participating. When we go into Social Hour via the breakout rooms after a service, we unmute all participants.

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Worship Committee.

Thanks and good health, *Jon Montan, Worship Committee Chair*

MONEY MATTERS

Church Council Financial Report

As of now, the church's financial position continues to be strong, but as with most things these days, there is uncertainty about the future. Church Council and the Budget & Finance Committee discussed and approved applying for funds via the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). As you may have read in the news, the first round of PPP funding has been fully allocated so we're now waiting to find out if and when there will be another round. If this does occur and if churches are still eligible, we are prepared to submit an application very quickly.

The previous rules of the program would allow us to apply for two months of payroll expenses as well as funds to cover rent/mortgage and utility payments. Because we are lucky enough to own our building and our utility expenses are fairly low, we planned to limit our request to the amount needed for payroll for two months (approximately \$25,000.) This funding comes technically in the form of a loan from the Small Business Association, but according to the previous guidelines, as long as the funds are used for the aforementioned purposes and within eight weeks of approval, it will be 100% forgiven.

At the of this writing we still aren't sure what the rules will be for the next chapter of the stimulus package and it is difficult to know if our application will be approved, but Church Council and Budget & Finance feel strongly that if the opportunity arises again, it is a way for the church to offset potential losses of income from pledges and other revenue streams such as the weekly offering and building use fees. This program is especially appropriate as it would help us protect our church's most valuable asset, our amazing and dedicated staff!

If you have any questions about the PPP or the church's application, please feel free to contact me at treasurer@uucantonny.org.

Gwen Cunningham, Treasurer

A New Way to Donate



Please consider using [Venmo](#) to make your contribution to the virtual collection plate during the Sunday Zoom service.

Venmo is a simple and convenient payment program using an app on your cell phone or other device. It is a free service when you use a debit card or direct payment from a bank account. It is completely secure, and the church is already equipped to accept payments this way.

After setting up your account it is easy to make a payment. Simply select the church as the recipient (the church's username is UU Church Canton), add the amount, and press PAY. This method has the added advantage of not interrupting the service.

Venmo is quick and easy and can be used for the Sunday morning offering and other payments to the church.

BUILDING & GROUNDS

The NY PAUSE order has required the B&G Committee to meet via Zoom to adjust our normal way of seeing to the needs of our building and grounds.

Our custodian, Rick Facey, is deep cleaning the building. He has already cleaned and disinfected the RE classrooms and main space. This has involved removing contents from the cabinets for a thorough cleaning, washing walls, and stripping and refinishing the no-wax floors. Rick took extra care to clean hard-surface toys, blocks, etc. in the nursery. He will be making his way through the rest of the building and if the PAUSE order continues, he will paint the Romer and Social Rooms.

Our annual spring work day has been cancelled but we are fortunate that Arianna Whittaker, our summer youth worker, has agreed to start working now. Our priority is raking, weeding, edging, and mulching the front and west side of our grounds. Locke Design and Build will begin lawn mowing in a few weeks. Miles Manchester and Ben Hunkins are coordinating efforts for growing vegetables in the Priest Garden.

Our goal is to have our building clean and our grounds looking beautiful when the green light is given to resume regular activity.

Pete Beekman, Building & Grounds Committee Chair

WELCOMING COMMITTEE

The Welcoming Committee extends a warm welcome to any new visitors who might be joining us from home. We hope you all are staying healthy and connected as much as possible to others. We also have a new feature to include. Just as we sometimes share information about new members, we would also like to share information from time to time on some of our more long-time members.

This month's featured member is **Sheila Cerwonka!**



Sheila came to our church for the first time in 1960 to listen to Max Coots preach. She became a member in the fall of 1964. Her husband Bob, a biology professor at Potsdam State, followed her lead the next year. Their two children, Hank and Robin, attended Religious Education classes.

Sheila was an early church librarian, inheriting that position from Phyllis Clark and later passing it on to Judy Gibson. She also was an RE teacher back when classes were taught by one volunteer for the whole year. Currently she participates in a Chalice Circle.

Outside of church Sheila was a swimming instructor in the public schools and she substitute taught Earth Science. She raced in international sailing competitions. In 1968 she became the first woman on the Potsdam Rescue Squad. Sheila lives in Potsdam, attends church regularly, and is often the first person in line for coffee at social hour.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020 UPDATE



General Assembly, the annual business meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association, has officially gone 100% virtual for 2020. The good news is that there will be a significant reduction in our carbon footprint and most likely a higher and perhaps more global attendance. This change also makes GA as close as your computer. The cost of virtual registration is \$150. Church Council has set aside money to pay for registrations. Please contact the Rev. James Galasinski for more information and how you can be a delegate. Learn more at <https://www.uua.org/ga/off-site/registrants>

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The Church and Community Pantry welcomes our regular customers and new customers looking for some relief in their food budgets at this coronavirus time. Our service area includes people from the towns of Canton, Clare, Hermon, DeKalb, and Russell. The Pantry has a lot of good, nutritious food available (including fresh produce and frozen meats). Our new prepackaged box distribution is quick and easy. People just knock on the entry door behind our building at 7 Main Street in Canton. If you are new to the pantry, it would be helpful to call ahead (315 386 3534). A volunteer will bring a big box or two (depending on family size) of food to your vehicle.

Our new (COVID) hours are noon to 3 p.m. on Wednesdays. We just added a satellite distribution center at the United Methodist Church on US 11 in DeKalb Jct. from noon to 2 on Thursdays in case people are over that way or if Thursday is more convenient for them.

Please note that our thrift shop at the front of the building is closed until shopping restrictions are lifted.

Visit the [Church and Community Program website](#) for more details and updates.



Unirondack Offering Virtual Programs

Unirondack has designed [Virtual One-Shots](#), which are activities for youth ages 11 – 18 years old. These are one-time events open to all who are interested on a donation basis. For more information, visit them [online](#).



Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton

Creating a welcoming, compassionate faith community,
committed to social justice and open to wonder.

Together we strive to:

- ⊕ Foster a spirit of inclusion and connection
- ⊕ Encourage exploration of truth and meaning
- ⊕ Nurture respect for all life and the environment
- ⊕ Live our values in the North Country and in the wider world



If you would like to receive weekly electronic news updates,
please email office@uucantonny.org
Submission Deadline for our next newsletter: Wednesday, May 20.